

VARIOUS

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THE SLAVER

On the 18th day of February 1850, Her Majesty's steamship *Rattler* was lying at anchor about twenty miles to the northward of Ambriz, a slave depôt situated on the western coast of Africa. Week after week had passed away in dull uniformity; while the oppressive heat, the gentle breeze which scarcely ruffled the surface of the deep, and the lazy motion of the vessel as it rolled on the long unceasing swell that ever sets on that rocky shore, lulled the senses of all into a sleepy apathy. The only music that ever reached our ears was the eternal roar of that monotonous surf, as it licked the rugged beach with its snowy tongue.

A few miles off, a range of low brown hills, covered with a stunted vegetation, runs parallel with the shore—along their undulating sides, angular spires of granite project through the parched and scanty soil; while on their highest brow one solitary giant stands, resembling an obelisk, from which the anchorage derives its name, 'The Granite Pillar.' No appearance of human life or labour exists around; the whole is a desert, over which these columnar formations—resembling a city of the Titans, crumbling slowly into dust—hold an empire of solitude and death. The imagination is oppressed with a sense of utter desolation that withers every mental effort.

This day was passing like so many before it; the sun was low on the horizon, and its yellow beams were throwing a brassy tint over the sea and sky; the sailors were engaged, some fishing with patient assiduity, others, grouped into small knots, listening to prosy yarns; while a few were prostrated round the decks in attitudes of perfect abandonment or sleep. The officers were leaning over the taffrail, trying, with a sportsman-like anxiety worthy of better prey, to hook a shark, which was slowly meandering under the stern; or looking contemplatively into the dark-brown waves, either watching the many forms of animal life which floated by, or recalling to memory the dear objects of distant lands. The officer of the watch, with his spyglass under his arm, was pacing languidly his narrow round, when 'Sail ho!' in clear and piercing tones, resounded from the mast-head, and with electric speed filled the dreamers with life and energy.

'Point to her,' cried the officer of the watch; while all eyes were directed to the look-out aloft, whose glass was immediately stretched to the north. Speculation now sits in every vacant eye, and conjecture on every silent tongue. The captain was at his post with vigilant alacrity. 'How is she standing? what sail is she under?' was soon answered, and the orders, 'Get the steam up, lower the propeller,' echoed round the decks, mingled with the shrill pipes of the boatswain's mates.

The men flew to their posts; and whilst the cumbrous screw was descending slowly into the water, the stokers had roused the smouldering embers into life.

'All hands up anchor!' The capstan revolves and creaks, as one and all of these willing men strain their starting muscles at the bars. The anchor reluctantly leaves its oozy bed; but the chinking of the cable, as it steadily ascends, reveals no change, until it swings at the bow.

'Go on ahead!' The steam whistles through its silent chambers, like sweet music, calling into life that ponderous mechanism, until it appears to dance with joy.

'Helm a-port—steady so!' The waves rise high on either bow as we dash through the foaming waters. Our distance from the object rapidly diminishes, while eager eyes are directed ahead, until it is seen from the deck. Hope fills the breast of the sanguine, despair that of the gloomy and desponding. Sure eyes and good telescopes soon descry the Yankee ensign floating aloft in lazy folds; and as

we come still nearer, those accustomed to observe the shape of sails and set of masts, detect the peculiarities of an old acquaintance. It is the *Lucy Ann*, an American vessel of a very suspicious character, which has been frequently boarded by our cruisers, but has ever been protected by the flag of her apparent country.

We are soon alongside, and our captain boards her, to examine her 'papers' once again, and to insnare, if possible, our wily enemy. On his return, we continue our course towards the Congo, whither they have been persuaded we are going for water. No sooner, however, do the shades of evening protect our movements from observation, than we change our course, and proceed directly out to sea a hundred miles or so, to prevent her passing us in the dark should she take her slaves on board this night, as it is suspected she will do.

Daylight comes next morning, and the best telescopes from aloft sweep the horizon, but not a speck can be seen on that desert sea. The sails are stripped from the vessel's masts, and she lies like a dead log, round which, at the unwonted spectacle, shoals of dolphins and porpoises come to gambol. It was pleasant to have something like life near us, and though it belonged to another element, it seemed a connecting-link with the rest of the animated creation. One long hour after another had passed away, and the most hopeful began to despair, while the expressions of the desponding grew more energetic against the propriety of lying thus inactive; but Captain Cumming, as patient in biding his time as he is quick in resolving and acting when the moment arrives, only replied: 'Wait till to-morrow morning!' This arrived like the last, and every eye was turned towards the rising sun as it slowly emerged from the waves, not to gaze on the purple radiance that streamed from its broad disk, but with the expectation of seeing the object of our solicitude revealed by the light of the eastern sky. Each one turned slowly away, disappointed, as soon as he found that he had been looking in vain; but there appeared a sullen pleasure in the eyes of those who had been prophesying evil, as their predictions appeared to be fulfilled.

As a matter of precaution for whatever might happen, the steam was ready; orders were now given to proceed, and we steamed on slowly towards the land. One hour passed away thus, another, and nearly a third, when a negro, perched beside the main truck, sang out with all his lungs: 'Sail ho!' His keen sense of vision, outstripping that of his white comrade, distinguished as a small speck the lofty royals, while the vessel was far below the horizon. A smile of satisfaction wreathed with dimples even the grimest faces, when the object of our pursuit approached us near enough to be recognised. Without faltering, she came on steadily, with every sail set, and her banner proudly waving in the gentle breeze, forbidding search. Each eye eagerly scrutinised her, speculation was busy, and the emotions were various as the temper and habit of each individual mind.

Having arrived alongside, our captain again boarded her in his gig. He was received politely, and without embarrassment, by the Yankee, who immediately offered refreshments, which were declined. Not a slave was to be seen, nor did there exist any smell, so universal a concomitant to indicate their presence. Some forty Brazilians, each with a cigar in his mouth, were loitering round the clean decks, while the crew were busy at the pumps, creating the greatest possible noise, in the accomplishment of which they were assisted by a flock of parrots and love-birds, perched in every direction.

Once more the ship's papers were produced, and carefully scanned, and the absence of one important document was detected. On being demanded, it was positively refused, and the presumption was thus created that it did not exist, and that therefore all were false.

These proceedings occupied a considerable time—a matter of preconcerted importance, as the suspicion was entertained that slaves were concealed below, and that soon the danger of impending suffocation would reveal the fact. Our chief took up a position near the main hatchway, and listened anxiously for the slightest indication. Various manœuvres were tried to get him away without success. The Brazilians were beginning to appear impatient; and on board the *Rattler*, whence, by telescopes, the proceedings were watched with deepest interest, the hopes of even the most sanguine were becoming faint, when Captain Cumming was observed to start, and point to the deck. He had heard

the stifled sound of intolerable agony rise from below his feet, like a peal of distant thunder. The slaves were suffocating from want of air, and their dread of their jailers was extinguished in the immediate struggle for life.

In a moment, the American perceived that the game he had been so skilfully playing was lost, and his assumed coolness deserted him. In a voice choked with emotion, he rapidly uttered: 'She is a Brazilian. I am not the captain; this is,' pointing to a tawny Portuguese at his elbow.

'Haul down the flag, and hoist her proper colours.'

Down came that ensign, polluted by the traffic it protected, amid the cheers of our men, which made the welkin ring.

'Don't let the poor devils die,' cried the stout American mate, actuated by the generosity of the race he sprang from, which his degrading employment could not wholly stifle. Assisted by our men, who had jumped out of the boat, the hatches were soon removed, exposing to view a mass of human misery which, being once seen, must remain impressed on the memory for ever—the naked bodies of men, women, and children, writhing in a heap, contorted, gasping for air, sinking from exhaustion, and covered with sweat and foam. The darkness which surrounded them only deepened the shades, without concealing a single feature; whilst the dense and sickening steam which curled heavily up from the reeking mass, made it a picture too horrible to contemplate, and one the minute details of which must be left to haunt the memory of those who were unfortunate enough to witness it.

First one and then another endeavoured to ascend, but with a strength unequal to the task, they fell back into the mephitic abyss. Our men rushed forward to their aid, and catching hold of their imploring hands, placed them upon deck. There, prostrate and indiscriminately huddled together, they gradually recovered from the effects of that terrible confinement, where 547 human beings were, without a breath of fresh air, kept for above two hours crushed together in a space only about three feet in height, and with a superficial extent not equal to that of their bodies, unless in a sitting position! The ordeal proved too much for the vital energy of above twenty, who perished one by one during the next fortnight or three weeks, without having felt the blessing of freedom.

An officer with a few men were immediately placed in charge of the prize, and navigated it to St Helena. The slaves, when there, are declared free, but upon conditions such as render it generally necessary for them to emigrate to the West Indies, to become, let us hope, happy and useful members of a British colony.

The Brazilians and American crew were taken on board the *Rattler*, and conveyed back to Ambriz, from thence, in all probability, to return to their horrible trade, in the hope of being more successful on another occasion. The captain was seen a few months afterwards, in another American vessel, returning from the Brazils, prepared, in all likelihood, to play a similar game with better success from the lesson he had received. The opportunity afforded us of observing the character of these men, produced a more favourable feeling towards them than was at first sight entertained. Several pleaded honourable motives for the degraded position in which they felt themselves placed, and nearly all would have done credit to a more respectable calling.

Our gallant chief's calculations were found to have been rigidly correct. That night after we left them, they believed that a boat would be detached to watch their movements; they therefore anchored, and waited for daylight. When that arrived without an enemy in sight, they felt secure.

The slaves, worn out by previous marching and counter-marching to shipping places, where their embarkation was prevented by the vigilance of our cruisers, rendered it almost a matter of necessity that they should now be taken on board. Their bodies had been galled and emaciated by the chains they carried, by the slender store of dry farina—the only food provided for them—and by the precarious and scanty supply of water obtainable on the arid plains or in the tangled forests they had traversed. The first canoe-load was taken alongside the ship about four o'clock in the afternoon, and in an hour the whole were on board. This is reckoned the most favourable time for getting under-way, as darkness enables them to leave the land without danger of being observed.

The preceding is a faithful picture of one of the melancholy incidents belonging to the hateful traffic in slaves. Let us hope that the time has at length nearly arrived which has been so long waited for, when we may say with truth, it is abolished; leaving only the memory of it to darken the page of history, and remain a moral lesson to mankind.

THE 'ADVOCATE' AND ITS AUTHOR

Literary talents and habits are fortunately not always dissociated from world-like conduct and skill in affairs. We have now become familiar with a class of men who, while cultivating even the more flowery fields of the Muses, are not on that account the less distinguished in their professional walks, or by the active part they take in the great practical movements of the age. The public, which does not readily admit of two ideas respecting any one man, is apt to lose sight of the literary in the worldly merit; but the former does not the less exist, and perhaps in time it will be equally acknowledged. We regard Mr Cox, author of the book under notice, as a remarkable example of the union of the man of affairs with the author. We learn, from a local record,¹ that he rose, about twenty years ago as an attorney in a western town, and took an active part in the fervid political doings of 1830-31. Ambitious of higher professional honours, he removed to London, and entered at the bar. In the course of eight or nine years, he has proceeded from one adventure to another, till he is now one of the most multiform of men. Not merely does he follow a strictly professional course as a barrister, but he conducts several periodical works of a laborious nature—the *Law Times* (newspaper), the *Magistrate*, the *County Courts' Chronicle*, and a series of Criminal Law Cases. For the preparation of these works, he has a printing establishment, the management of which would be a sufficient occupation for most men. It gives work to 250 persons, and 10,000 business accounts are kept in it. As if all these engagements were not enough, Mr Cox has established the well-known literary periodical work (fortnightly) the *Critic*. The conducting of a work designed to report upon the current literature of the day is perhaps one of the most delicate of tasks, for the critics necessarily are themselves authors, are the friends and enemies of authors, and are of course liable to all the usual fallacies which beset human judgment. Hence it is that we see one such work lose credit through its universal benevolence, and another rush to the opposite extreme, of asserting independence by an unvarying tone of rancour and dissatisfaction—obviously a not less unjust course both to literary men and the public, and in the long-run, equally sure to destroy the credit of the men who adopt it. Amidst the difficulties proper to such a task, we believe the *Critic* has hitherto steered a comparatively irreproachable course, keeping mainly in view a faithful and painstaking *account* of every book submitted to its notice, and neither trading upon the smiles nor the groans of authors. Of a warm and cordial nature, and with an intense love of literature, he seems to have known how to encourage genius, even while pointing to its errors; and, if we may judge by the internal evidence of the work itself, he has succeeded in rallying round him many of the high and generous spirits of the time. The *Critic* is distinguished by a more than usual proportion of thought, and by very little of the small superficial cant of criticism.

It will excite some surprise that Mr Cox has found time, amidst his numberless duties, to prepare a professional work of considerable magnitude, and of solid merit and utility. Such, we take leave to say, is the *Advocate*, of which the first volume is now before us.² It is a book which, though intended primarily for young legal aspirants, will also instruct, and indeed entertain the public. It is more than this for those who can pursue the spirit of a work through its details, and see the character of an individual or a class rising palpably out of reasonings, maxims, and material circumstances. Such readers will give a hero to the pages before us, and follow him in his career with more than the interest that waits upon romance. They will observe, in the first place, his natural advantages: 'Has he a healthy frame, capable of enduring long-continued exertion of mind and body, the confinement of the study, the excitement of practice, the crowded court by day, the vigil of thought by night? Can he subsist with a sleep of five hours? Can he, without dyspepsy, endure irregular meals—hasty

¹ The *Somerset County Gazette*.

² *The Advocate, his Training, Practice, Rights, and Duties*. By Edward W. Cox, Esq., Barrister-at-Law. London: Law Times Office. 1852.

eatings and long fastings? If he be not blessed by nature with the vigorous constitution that will bear all this, and more, let him not dream of adventuring into the arena of advocacy.' Good lungs and a strong voice are indispensable: strong rather than agreeable—let him even scream or squeak, as some of his brethren do, but scream or squeak with *power*. His mental qualifications are—keen and rapid perception, sound judgment, power of concentration, and that imagination which paints in words. Of these, the first is the cornerstone of the mental character of the advocate. Of the moral qualities, courage and self-confidence must be combined with caution, and the whole elevated by honesty and truthfulness of nature. At this point the philosophical reader will perhaps demur, and inquire whether those clients who are in the wrong find any difficulty in obtaining the most talented defenders—for a con-si-der-ation. But we will postpone that issue.

In addition to his natural qualifications, the advocate must possess what is called a small pecuniary independence: 'The practical conclusion we would deduce from the review we have taken of the expenses unavoidably attendant upon the profession of advocate, and which amount at the least to L.650 previous to his call, and to L.250 per annum afterwards, is this:—Let no man who values his happiness, or his ultimate success in life, make the bar his profession, unless he has resources, other than his profession, upon which he can rely for a clear income of L.150 per annum at the least. This will still leave L.100 to be provided for by that profession; but that is a risk he may not unreasonably run, if conscious that, in all other respects, he is qualified for ultimate success. With less than that, it would be unwise to incur the hazard. With no resources, as is sometimes seen, it is madness.'

The aspirant to the bar must methodise his time. 'In mapping out the day, make ample allowance for rest and for refreshment. Nothing is gained in the end by unduly abbreviating these. Provided you work without wasting a moment in your working-hours, you can afford to be liberal in your apportionment of time to exercises of the body and relaxations of the mind. Above all, and at whatever sacrifice, begin your allotment by devoting two hours at the least in each day to active bodily exercise, and give one of these to the early morning, and the other to the evening. So with your meals. First consult health, without which your studies will be unproductive, and your hopes of future success blighted. Thus, then, would stand the account for the day:—Exercise, two hours; meals and rest, three; sleep, seven; for study, twelve.' Twelve hours for study would be too long, if he did not make study itself a recreation by means of variety. 'The profound should be exchanged for the more superficial; the grave for the gay; such as engage the reasoning powers for those which appeal rather to the perception or the memory. Natural science should take its turn with law; languages with logic; rhetoric with mathematics, and such like—an entire change in the faculties employed being in fact a more perfect relief than entire rest.' An hour to the more difficult law-books is enough at a time, but that hour should alternate frequently with lighter studies. Educational and professional studies—physical training—and exercise in the art of speaking, are all of high importance; and it will be found that our author's advice on the subject is worth attending to. The education of the aspirant must be completed in the chambers—first, of a conveyancer; second, of a special pleader (or, if aiming at the equity bar, of an equity draughtsman); and third, of a general practitioner. As for his formal and nominal studentship in the Inns of Court, that merely serves prescriptively to qualify him for his call to the bar. 'If he purposes to practise as a conveyancer, or at the equity bar, he should enter himself at Lincoln's Inn; but if he designs to practise the common law, either as a special pleader, or immediately as an advocate, his choice lies between the Inner and Middle Temple and Gray's Inn,' The Inner Temple is the most select; the Middle Temple the most varied in its society; and Gray's Inn the most liberal in its table. Having chosen his Inn, 'he must obtain the certificate of two barristers, members of the society, together with that of a bencher, that he is a fit person to be received into it;' and he is admitted, as a matter of course.

Many of our readers, on entering the City, through Temple Bar, have seen a small open gateway on the right hand. It is a quiet, retired-looking place, grave, and somewhat gloomy; and in contrast with Fleet Street, and its torrent of population, is rather striking and remarkable. Yet, hurried away

by the living stream, they have doubtless passed on, and perhaps have forgotten to inquire to what that solemn avenue leads. Let them enter, the next opportunity they have, and make use of their own eyes. 'A few paces, and you are beyond the roar of wheels and the tramp of feet. Tall, gloomy, smoke-embrowned buildings, whose uniformity of dulness is not disturbed by windows incrustated with the accumulated dust of a century, hem you in on either side, and oppress your breathing as with the mildewy atmosphere of a vault. The dingy ranks of brick are broken by very narrow alleys; and here and there, peeping under archways, you may espy little paved court-yards, with great pumps scattering continual damp in the midst of them, and enclosed with just such dusky walls and dirty windows as you have already noticed. You are amazed at the silence that prevails in these retreats, so near the living world, and yet so entirely secluded from it. But not less will you be interested by the peculiar appearance of the persons you meet in this place. The majority of them carry packets of written papers tied about with red tape, and folded after a fashion here invariably observed.... First, and most abundant, are certain short, thin-visaged, spare-limbed, keen-featured, dapper-looking men, who appear as if they had never been young and would never be old, clothed in habiliments of sober hue, seemingly as unchangeable as themselves. They walk with a hurried step, and a somewhat important swing of the unoccupied arm. A smaller packet of the aforesaid tape-tied paper peeps from either pocket; they look right on, and hasten forward as if the fortunes of half the world rested upon their shoulders, and the wisdom in the briefs at their elbow had all been distilled from the skull covered by that napless hat. If you do not move out of the way, you will probably be knocked down and trodden upon by them—unconsciously of course. They are *attorneys' clerks*.

'The second species found in this region are more youthful in aspect, carry themselves with more swagger, wear their hats jantily, with greasy curls coaxed to project beyond the brim. They affect a sort of secondhand gentility, cultivate great brooches, silver guard-chains, and whiskers, and have the air of persons claiming vice-royalty in the dominions in which they live and move and have their being. They are *barristers' clerks*.

'The third class are gentlemanly but very shabbily dressed men, who look as if they were thinking of something beside themselves. They are of all ages, and statures, and complexions; of feature of all degrees of ugliness *in form* and beauty of *expression*. You cannot mistake them; there is a family-likeness running through all of them. They are *barristers*.

'The fourth species are composed of men of busy, bustling aspect, arrayed for the most part in garments of formal cut, and of the fashion of a bygone day. They *always* look as ordinary men do when told on some pressing emergency to "look sharp." Their countenances, motions, and gait express thought and anxiety. They hurry onward, noticing nothing and nobody. They are *attorneys*.

'Lastly, you discern a few wasted forms and haggard faces, on which lines are traced by the icy finger of Disappointment, and garments, growing ragged, ill protect from the keen draughts that play through these passages hearts aching with the sickness of hope deferred. The pockets, though tightly buttoned, are lank and light. They step briskly and eagerly onward, if entering; they creep slowly, if passing out toward the street. They are *clients*.'

This is the Temple, and these are its denizens; but in pursuing your way, as you emerge suddenly from the huge masses of building in which you have been swallowed up, you see with new surprise an open area of green turf, with beds of flowers, rows of trees, and leafy walks, and shady seats; and hear the fit and natural accompaniments of such a scene—the shrill voices of children, and the silvery laugh of ladies as they stroll through the Temple Gardens. Groups of law-students, too, 'are lounging there, laughing and talking; and a few solitary youths, with pale faces and earnest eyes, are poring upon great books in professional bindings, heedless of the attractions of tree or flower, or child or woman.'

Beyond the garden is the great water highway of the metropolis, the princely Thames, with its crowding barges, its flashing skiffs, and sweeping steamers. Among the gloomy buildings there is *yet* another garden-plot, with a fountain in constant play; and yet another, a smooth-shaven lawn,

with paths and flower-beds, on the brink of the river. 'Here, in this garden of the Middle Temple, there is no human presence to disturb the profound quiet of the place, as in the more spacious garden of the Inner Temple which you have lately quitted. Seats are scattered about, and pretty summer-houses invite to study or contemplation, but they are unoccupied by any visible presence. One is inclined to imagine that the Benchers have dedicated this garden to the exclusive occupation of the dead luminaries of the law, as the garden on the other side is devoted to its living oracles. With such a fancy, we always feel disposed to take off our hat to the invisibles, as we pass the tranquil spot where we suppose them to be "doomed for a certain time to walk."'

A red building on the right is the magnificent hall of the Middle Temple, with the carved screen of oak taken from the Spanish Armada. This is the hall in which the Templar eats his way to the bar; but if he should have no appetite for such dinners, it is not necessary that he should devour more than three, provided he pays for the whole fourteen. 'Shortly before the hand on the dial over the doorway points to five, crowds of gentlemen may be seen hurrying through the labyrinthine paths that intersect the Temple in all directions, and concentrating at the yard before the hall, for dinner there waits for no man, and, better still, no man waits for dinner. Gowns are provided for the student in the robing-room, for the use of which a small term-fee is paid, and, thus habited, he is introduced into the Hall. But it is now no longer hushed and sombre, but a scene of brightness and bustle. The tables are spread for dinner in close and orderly array; wax-lights in profusion blaze upon them; a multitude of gowned men are lounging on the seats, or talking in groups, or busily looking out for the most agreeable places, which are secured by simply placing the spoon in the plate. Suddenly a single loud thump is heard at the door. All rush to their seats: it is opened wide; the servants range themselves on either side, and between their bowing ranks behold the benchers enter in procession, and march to the dais allotted to them. The steward strikes the table three times with his hammer to command silence, says a grace before meat, and the feast begins.' Gradations of rank are closely observed. 'The benchers' tables are ranged upon the dais, across the hall. The tables in the body of the hall are placed lengthwise, the barristers occupying those nearest to the dais, and the students taking the others indiscriminately. They are laid so as to form messes for four, each mess being provided with distinct dishes, and making a party of itself. The persons who chance to be seated at the same mess need no other introduction; he who sits at the head is called "the captain;" he first carves for himself, and then passes the dishes to the others in due order. The society presents each mess with a bottle of wine—always port—a custom which might be most advantageously violated.'

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